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Title : CONSERVATION OF MARINE MAMMALS IN PERU: NEW EDUCATION EXPERIENCE FOR FISHERMEN CHILDREN

Category : Conservation

Student :

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Abstract : As it is known on psychology, persons can only love what they know and feel attachment through a learning process, keeping the experience or the knowledge for personal improvement. During 2001 to 2003, our Education program gave information about marine mammal biology, conservation and protection to children and students from two fishermen communities in Peru: Chorrillos (12°09.593'S-77°01.654'W) and Punta Negra (12°22.081'S-76°47.943'W). Our proposal was to sensitize these persons in growth to reinforce values like respect to life and protection of the environment, showing them a different relationship between humans and marine mammals and making them feel part of a community dedicated to conservation. This is a different model of interaction with the ocean for local fishermen communities. The program included videos showing the historical relationship between humans and marine mammals, images updating marine mammal killing in Peru, self evaluation calling for personal conservation actions, proposal of solutions, and direct sightings of animals in the wild. Students showed awareness and disagreement with marine mammal killing that their parents were many times involved in. Students involved had clear and precise ideas about the need to protect marine mammals and the need of improvements within their communities to interact with these species. After this education experience, they proposed how to improve awareness on their community and contribute to the conservation efforts to stop the killing. They organized in teams to spread the word on conservation among their friends and their fishermen parents. The impact of the educational program used was demonstrated when both communities joined our Marine Mammal Stranding Network, where fishermen and children participate positively whenever a marine mammal is stranded or entangled on nets, preventing the death of the animal due to human interaction.